

REMARKS

In the aforementioned Office communication, Examiner Johnson indicated the allowability of claims 30-35 and the allowable subject matter in claim 45. Claim 45 has been canceled and rewritten as new claim 61 so that it is no longer dependent upon a rejected base claim. Accordingly, claims 30-35 and 61 are felt to be in allowable form.

Claims 43, 47, and 51 were rejected under Section 102 based on the patent to Corey. Claim 51 was also rejected under Section 102 as being anticipated by the patent to Tonomura. Claim 52 was rejected under Section 102 as being anticipated by the patent to Colson et al. '235. Claim 53 was rejected under Section 102 as being anticipated by the patent to Welfonder. Claim 52 has been canceled herein and, accordingly, the rejection thereof is rendered moot.

Before specifically discussing the rejection of the claims, it should be appreciated the subject matter of the present invention is related to that of the patents to Corey and Tonomura in that they disclose window covering products wherein vanes are attached to a support structure along a top edge and movable along a bottom edge so that operating elements can raise the bottom edge toward or away from the top edge to open or close the vanes. The system disclosed in Corey, however, can only be operated in that way; the entire panel cannot be raised or lowered. In Tonomura, while the panel itself can be raised or lowered, it is only gathered by lift cords so that the fabric itself is suspended beneath a headrail in a draped or drooping condition.

In the present invention, the vanes in a panel are adapted to be not only opened and closed, as described above, but the panel itself can also be rolled around a roller so as to retract the entire panel from an extended position across an architectural opening.

Independent claims 43 and 51 have been amended to claim a panel and a roller and are described so that the strips of material that have fixed upper edges and movable lower edges are operative by moving the lower edges toward or away from the upper edges and the panel, which includes the strips of material having the first and second or upper and lower edges, can be wrapped around the roller. This concept not being shown in the prior art, it is felt claims 43 and 51 are now patentably distinct from the prior art.

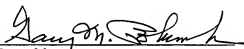
Claim 53 was previously rejected based on the patent to Welfonder with the claim being directed toward a covering for an architectural opening that has a panel of material secured to a roller within a headrail along an upper edge and secured to a bottom rail that has two component parts that are pivotally interconnected. This claim has been amended to state the panel is comprised of a support structure and a plurality of horizontally extending strips of material supported on the support structure with the strips having an upper edge secured to the support structure and a movable lower edge. The support structure is defined in claim 53 as being operatively connected to only one component part of the bottom rail and the strips of material are defined as being operatively connected to only the other component of the bottom rail.

Welfonder discloses, according to the examiner's interpretation, a two-piece bottom rail, but it does not include a support structure operatively secured to only one of the pieces and horizontally-extending strips of material operatively secured only to the other piece. This being the case, it is felt claim 53 is now patentably distinct from Welfonder.

It is felt each of the claims remaining in the application is now in allowable form and there being no remaining issues, it is felt the application is in condition for allowance and such action is courteously requested.

Dated this 5th day of March 2009.

Respectfully submitted,


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GMP/dtc